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A
LETTER
TO THE
BISHOP of SALISBURY,
Occasion'd by his
LORDSHIP'S SPEECH
On the First
ARTICLE
OF
IMPEACHMENT
AGAINST

Dr. Henry Sacheverell.

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A Letter to the Bishop of *Oxford* occasion'd by his
Lordship's Speech, on the First Article of Impeach-
ment against Dr *Henry Sacheverell*. Price 3 *d.*

*A Letter to the Bishop of Salisbury,
Occasion'd by his Lordship's Speech
on the First Article of Impeach-
ment against Dr. Henry Sache-
verell.*

My LORD,

IN any Age but our own, to Write against a *Catholick* Bishop would be thought a Schismatical and impious attempt, but I have not only the Approbation of one of your Lordship's much esteem'd Friends, Namely, Mr. *Hoadley*, who after the modern way, has this to boast of, that he is the first Man that ever so Severely attack'd that Reverend Order, but your Lordship's too, who has so eagerly contended for Cases of extream necessity; this may well be alledg'd in my behalf in this Critical moment, when Men are so bold as to say, that those who ought to be the Guardians of our Church, the assertors of its Discipline, an the most vigorous Defenders of its Orthodox Principles, are so basely perfidious to that sacred Trust, as to betray it! It was Zeal for the Church which procur'd me to undertake this task, to Vindicate, if possible, your Lordship among the rest, from those vile Aspersions which indiscreet Men would cast upon

you; nay to such an height of Impudence are some Men arriv'd, that they positively assert your Lordship to be so stricken in Age that you are incapable to know your own meaning; but I always had that esteem of your Lordship's Judgment and Learning, as to think that you had a meaning, tho' the Vulgar part of Mankind are unable to penetrate that mysterious Labyrinth, the chain of Subtle profound thoughts, which so Eminently Shine in your Lordship's Life and Conduct, with what amazing artificial methods you have stemm'd the torrent of prevailing parties, whose success by an indiscreet opposition might endanger the loss of your Estate, deprive you of all the Comforts of Life; and make you always Live poor, Pious and Miserable, you may truly reflect on your Skilfull management in the most difficult times. When the Doctrine of Passive Obedience was Preach'd up, you had so much discretion as to be in Fashion too, not like that stiff-necked Prelate *Land*, whose Piety could dispense with Martyrdom, but by a seasonable compliance you have at last sav'd your self, and Wisely left the Church to the Protection of Heaven. Four successive Monarchs of our Island may boast of having you for their Friend, for you never deserted them in their prosperity, nor was your generosity alone confin'd to this Corner of the World, a meer point in respect of the rest, but the *French* King is not a little oblig'd to you for your Industry, your *Regale* will be an everlasting Memorandum of your good nature and your Probity. *Holland* can never be Ungratefull to you for the *Deep design* which prov'd so beneficial to her, which all the World is acquainted

acquainted withall, insomuch that some too Scandalously reflect upon you, as if you preferr'd it before your Native Country. I mention this only out of Christian Compassion to those Wretches, that I may put your Lordship in mind to offer up your Prayers for their Repentance, for we are all sensible of that forgiving Temper which so Remarkably display'd it self the last Reign. I hope both for your Prayers and your Blessing, not as an Enemy but a Friend, in taking so much pains to prove what every one knows, that your Lordship in this position is much in the wrong. I am as unwilling to expose a Bishop of the Church, as an Obedient Son of it can be; but the Principles of our Religion are so indispensably necessary, that I must beg your Lordship's Pardon, if it carries me beyond that respect which was usually paid to the primitive Bishops; the case is widely different now; when they were chose after a regular Method they might challenge a greater Claim to our Veneration and Esteem, but now, as your Lordship has fully prov'd in your *Regale*, the nomination of them to be a Prerogative, the Emperours in the Infant Age of Christianity never thought of it, it's every ones Duty, tho not to usurp their Province, nevertheless to take care that advantages of that nature may not injure our most Holy Religion. I hope, nay firmly believe that as you are a Christian Bishop, you are not so much of a Hobbist as to assert the Princes Right to extend to the Articles of our Faith, upon which consideration I may, without giving any offence to your Lordship, or Scandal to the Church of which I profess my self a Member, concern my self when my Conscience suggests

suggests to me that a Duty of our Holy Religion is Universally decry'd ; when *St. Paul*, who was above the Episcopal Order, took such care to Preach it up without those exceptions your Lordship supposes to have been reserved in his Mind, and by a handsome way of begging the question, tell the World that he could not mean otherwise if he meant Sense, which as I believe he did, so I as much wonder that so many warm disputes should be rais'd by so many Learned Men about a Contradiction in Terms, which if there was, according to *Mr. Hoadley's* positive assertion, it might be so self-Evident as that a Man of Sense would scorn to quarrel in defence of so Wretched a Cause ; but as my poor judgment could never perceive either such Nonsense in *St. Paul's* Writings or the Interpretations of them which have been Unanimous in the same opinion with my self for 1500 Years at least, I cannot be affected with these Sophisms, but must believe, if the Holy Ghost is Inspir'd, that absolute Passive Obedience is a Christian Doctrine. It's true your Lordship is of another Mind, but upon what Ground it's built, I hope to satisfy the World. You assure us in the very beginning of your Speech that the most Loyal Subject had ever this reserve in his Obedience ; extream necessity. I am heartily sorry that an Expression should fall from your Mouth which might make some injudicious Men suspect your Veracity. I would willingly know whether it's inconsistent with true Loyalty, to assert an unlimited Passive Obedience, or whether it never was maintain'd 'till now, this at the first sight seems

seems so strange, so contradictory to the knowledge of us all, as were I not prejudiced in your Lordship's behalf, I should judge otherwise of you than is consistent with your high Station. The Council, my Lord, pleaded like Lawyers, they were to say all they could for the defendant, let his Case be Right or Wrong, they were not hir'd by the party to plead the Cause, but to bring off the suppos'd Criminal. They said that in Condemning him, they Condemn'd the Memories of the most Holy and Pious Men, who in all Ages have said the same with the Doctor, that if he had any secret reserve, in not declaring it, he acted no worse than the best of Men have done from the time that Christianity first Flourish'd in the World: Whether these Men acted as was expected is little to the justice of the Cause, which being a part of Religion did not depend on such mercenary Tongues; unless your Lordship gives us better Satisfaction at the End of the Discourse than the beginning, some may repent the trouble they were put to of Reading it over. You seem to labour to perswade the World of your Fidelity to the late King; a needless task, when there are few but know how well you Serv'd his Predecessor; but I desire your Lordship not to draw so hasty a conclusion, as that your Honesty was so great, that if you had thought your self in an Error you would have soon reform'd it. Tho' no one has a greater opinion of your Lordship than myself, I shall not pass that Judaical Complement Mr. *Hoadley* us'd to the Bishop of *Exeter*, on you, viz. That your Character alone is sufficient to put a stamp upon Truth; But to deal Candidly with

with you, if I am in the wrong, I shall not scruple to ask Your's, and the World's Pardon ; you would have us believe that the Papists held that Power was not from God, tho' it may easily be prov'd that it was the Opinion of few at that time ; In *St. Bernard's Works* we find this expression, *Per quem Reges regnant, ipse nos praecepit populis suis, &c. Ex persona Ducis Burgundiae Epistola 127.* *Beatus Anselmus* has these Words, *Servire Dominis a quibus ipso Ordinante Subjecti estis*, in *Epist. ad Ephes. Cap. 6.* Nor can your Lordship easily prove that, to have been believ'd by many of the Papists themselves, *Ockam* was no Heretick, but he took on him sufficiently to confute that Scandalous Tenet, Whatever Power or Authority was usurp'd by the Popes, it's sufficient that such great Men as *St. Bernard*, and *Anselm*, besides many others, too tedious now to mention, had other thoughts of this matter. The Protestant Princes were not the first who asserted all Power was from God ; it has been universally own'd by all Men in all Ages of the Church, nor were those plain expressions (such as is a wonder that any dispute should arise about) ever taken in so absurd an interpretation as you would put upon them, that where they expressly say that all Power is from God, their meaning is that by the Laws of God, the Authority of the Laws of the Land is secur'd to them ; this sounds so obscure, so perplex'd and intricate, that one would think your Lordship studied to be so on purpose, to darken your meaning that none but Men of the greatest penetration might understand you. Words were always made use of to

declare

declare our intentions, but the Modern way is the reverse of this ; these Phrases which were always thought to mean one thing, now signifie the contrary ; an Affirmative is turn'd to a Negative, and a Negative to an Affirmative ; thus we turn upside down the Common Reason of Mankind.

I would enquire of your Lordship, that supposing they really meant that all Power was from God, could they invent plainer Words than these us'd to let the World understand them in that Sense? Can you think Mankind so egregiously Stupid as to be Flatter'd by your Lordship's Eloquence out of their common Reason, to perswade the World, that when it's maintain'd by any Man, That all Power is from God, they meant, That all Power was not from God? This seems to carry so much assurance in the Front as would amaze Mankind, was it not manag'd by so Skilfull a Pen, which can Impose upon the World the grossest Absurdities. It's true you make us all admire the depth of your Ingenuity, but your Lordship having no patent to Monopolize all Learning to your self, you cannot take it ill from my Hands if a concern for Truth makes me against my will dissent from so great a Man, especially in this Sentence of yours, viz. Not they (*i. e.* The Protestant Princes) meant they had any distinct Authority besides the Law of the Land deriv'd to them from God, but *That by the Laws of God, the Authority of*

the Law of the Land was Secur'd to them. It deserves to be dissected for the benefit of the Publick, a thought wrapt up in such mysterious Terms may contain something in it worth our Consideration, tho' I apprehend that the inquisitive part of Mortals may miss their expectations; for, my Lord, Authority was always thought a Power by Virtue of which any one acts; but to make it agreeable to your own interpretation, it must be thus, That to say all Authority is from God, and all Authority is from the People are Synonymous Terms. In short the People are Deified, an Honour they may thank your Lordship for, in Conjunction with some others who lately have presum'd to proceed too far in their Commendations of that many headed beast. But your Lordship had another meaning, which I may once venture to guess at, *viz.* That to say all Authority is from God means only that God has Commanded Obedience to that Authority which is from the People; either of which Interpretations the Reader may judge of as he pleases, but in my poor Opinion they both sound contrary to the express words of the Authors, nor was this assertion ever proved, but only, after the usual way, bagg'd. You proceed to tell us of a Parliamentary Censure to confirm your opinion, tho' it may be prov'd from undeniable acts of our Constitution that it meant the quite contrary. We find 16. *Rich.* 2. 5. That it's a full Declaration in Parliament in the case of purchasing Bulls from *Rome*, that the King is Subject to none but.

but God alone. On King *Charles's* Restoration the acts then made were plain against your Lordship, that I know not how you will urge the Declaration of the Parliament on your side. You give a very extraordinary Solution of that Choaking Epistle of *St. Paul's* to the *Romans*; you tell us that he directed his Epistles to the Jews alone, who harbour'd a Ridiculous notion, that they were not oblig'd to submit to a stranger as their Prince. To remove this obstacle he endeavours to perswade them of this case to reform an Errour so pernicious to Society; but then, my Lord, when I consider'd some few difficulties you had left untouch'd, I receiv'd very little satisfaction from your Hands in this particular; for, my Lord, the Epistle of *St. Paul* to the *Romans* was directed to the new Converts of that City, consequently the Doctrine concern'd them as much as the Jews; besides granting your Supposition, that the Jews were so prejudic'd, and that the Epistle was not Directed to the *Romans* but to them, yet I thought that none but the Jewish Converts were affected by this Text, who could not possibly be suppos'd to maintain that notion after their Conversion to the Christian Religion; nor does *St. Paul* seem to hint at your Passage in *Deuteronomy*. According to you it was an Inexcusable negligence in that Apostle to leave the People unsettled in that point, so material as it seem'd to be, and so Reasonable, that they ought to maintain Inviolable a Liberty which their Creator at first Indulg'd them with;

But so far is it from being so, that the Doctrine of Passive Obedience is deliver'd in Scripture to us in General Terms, tho' your Lordship, contrary to the opinion of the best Commentators, is pleas'd to say, That they never meant so. It's certain that this Text was mention'd on this occasion, to remove the Scandal the Heathens had cast upon our Religion, as if we maintain'd the Old Jewish Principle of Rebellion. I confess thus far, and it's the opinion of *Tirinus* and many others ; but the mistake of your Lordship was in Intimating that *St. Paul* in that Text said only, That it was Lawful for the Jews to submit to a Stranger, but a narrow Scrutiny into the Commentators would convince the World that it is your own peculiar thought, and it's pity but that you should have the Honour of it. I shall save my self that trouble ; the matter is so Gross that there is little need of insisting upon it. Your Lordship in the same Paragraph gives some offence to Suspicious Persons in one Expression, *viz: The Primitive Christians Reckon'd the Infamous Death of Nero one of the Articles of the Glory of their Religion.* This, my Lord, has a bad aspect. I hope that you do not think Rebellion the Glory of our Religion ; the Regicides in the late and Troublesome Times, the Rye-house Plotters in King *Charles* the Second's Reign, might boast of these Antimonarchical Principles, but I have too much Charity to believe you one of that Rank. I wish your Lordship would have oblig'd the World with those Passages where the Primitive Christians boasted of their

their being concern'd at his Death; where they own'd the Rebellion and justified it as some do at this Day. Their Conduct was more Innocent and Cautious, they had too much Honesty to betray an Article of their Faith, to feed their Ambition or satisfy their Revenge. If they did not assist *Nero* to preserve his Life from the fury of his enrag'd Subjects, it was neither want of a sense of their Duty, nor a Principle of Resistance, which influenc'd the rest, but Inability to shew their Loyalty even to the worst of Tyrants. Your Lordship next brings an Instance of *Trajan*, which is little to us Christians; it was only a popular Sentence to keep their affections; this was one of the Remarkable policies of his Reign; you cannot think *Trajan* so void of Common sense to give a Liberty to his Subjects to depose him upon male administration; it could mean no more than high assurances of his Governing well. Your Lordship next gives so just an account of the Primitive Christians sufferings as could not but extract a smile from me to see your Lordship so generously make this concession in to the bargain, That let the Laws be never so cruel and unjust in *foro Conscientiæ*, the full Legislative Power may not be Resisted. If King *James* had Committed the greatest Tyranny in Concert with his Parliament, which you take to be the Supream Power, then it would be Rebellion to Resist; you have deserted the main Proofs of your Opinion by granting this, and agree in some measure with the Doctor, who says no more himself. I could not but

but take notice of an Inadvertency of your Lordship in this Paragraph, in Confuting your own Argument; this you had not the least Reason to do; it's enough to quarrel with our fellow Christians, not to fall out with our selves, but I suppose it unawares, or a Man of your Sense had never been guilty of it; you confess that the Supream Power ought not to be Resisted, that the Laws ought to have their due Course let them be never so cruel or oppressive; but then, my Lord, according to your own words the Primitive Christians could not be justified in opposing by force of Arms the repealing those Laws, for the Legislative Power can repeal as well as make them. Thus in endeavouring to clear them of Rebellion you make them actually guilty of it. We will attend your Lordship thro' your whole Speech, and examine how well the remainder of it proves Rebellion or successful Usurpation a Doctrine of our Church. The Homilies recommend the *Apocrypha* to us as a Book containing wholesome Doctrine, but it's a poor consequence that the Historical part of that Book should be an infallible precedent for us; you may as Reasonably justify the Treachery us'd towards *Simon*, and other actions equally Scandalous as this. The Church of *England* in no Articles of her Faith has given any Intimation of a Reserve. Bishop *Jewel* in the passage quoted by you, is so far from defending the Nobles of *Scotland* as Rebels, that he endeavours to clear them of that Calumny, asserts they never drew the Sword or attempted War against the Prince; and at the end he adds this

Clause;

Clause, By all Lawful means. Your alledging that
 Venerable Man for proof of your Doctrine is
 improper, for he never extended Self-defence
 (as you call it) so far, or drew such ugly
 Consequences from it as you have done. We may
 easily perceive the Opinion of that Good-Man,
 which quite contradicts your Lordship's. In
 his defence of the Apology of the Church of
 England he has these Words; We never Arm'd
 the People nor taught them to Rebel, for
 Religion against their Prince; if any thing at
 any time hath happen'd otherwise, it hath been
 either some wilful Rage, or some fatal Fury.
 Again, If the Prince happen to be Wicked,
 Cruel, or Burthensome, *Arma nostra sunt pre-*
ces & lachryma. In another Place he delivers his
 Opinion so opposite to what your Lordship would
 have the World believe him to be, that there can
 be no longer any doubt remain of his Honesty
 and Integrity. When Mr. *Harding* says, I defie
 all attempts whatsoever, that any Subject or
 Subjects whatsoever of their own private Au-
 thority should take Arms against their Prince for
 matters of Religion: He returns this Answer,
 Wherefore except you only matters of Religion?
 Is it Lawfull for the Subject in any case whatso-
 ever either of Life or Government, to arm himself
 against his Prince, and would you thus perswade
 the People? Is this your Religion? Is this your
 Doctrine? Or what mean you then by private
 Authority? May then the Subject Arm against the
 Prince by Common advice or by publick Autho-
 rity of the Realm? If so, wherefore then Blame
 you

you the Nobles in *Scotland*. Afterwards, If your Lordship had been pleas'd to have quoted all the Sentence you would have had less Reason to boast of having him of your mind; so far from that, he says the *Scotch* acted only like *David*; they took up Arms to retire more safely; tho' they had twice the Strength of their Prince, they had rather Fly for Protection into the Marches of *England*, than Endanger the Life of their Sovereign. Thro' the whole, he seems rather to extenuate as much as possible the Guilt, than to Clear them quite of the Imputation. He pretends Ignorance of the Constitution of that Country, how far by their Laws the Resistance they us'd was Rebellion, and says this in their Defence, That the Queen was still in quiet Possession of the Throne; Thus, my Lord, I have clear'd your predecessor's meaning so fully as sufficiently answers what can be alledg'd in your Favour out of his Writings.

Your Lordship proceeds in a very improper manner to an Instance of a Sovereign Prince, and one of the most Politick that ever sway'd a Scepter. What She acted is foreign to our purpose. If you can prove that She was advis'd to act in that manner by the Bishops of our Church, it will better deserve an Answer; but 'till then, you Lordship may excuse my giving my self that Trouble. The Opinion of Bishop *Bilson* shall be next examin'd, and we shall find that in some places he Answers your Lordship's expectations no better than the former;

mer; In a Treatise of the true difference between Christian Subjects and Unchristian Rebellion he has these Words, part 3, p. 520. I must confess that except the Laws of these Realms do permit the People to stand on their Right, if the Prince should offer that wrong, *I dare not allow their Arms*; afterwards he owns the Law of God gives no Man leave to Resist his Prince, but what the Laws of some particular Countries may, he leaves to those who know what they are best, and in the whole Discourse he never allows the Prince may be Depos'd; Thus you see Bishop *Bilson* defended the Queen after a more Modest way than has lately been us'd, he never pretended to wrest the Scripture or any part of our Religion, but reconcil'd all as well as the cause would bear; you urge, my Lord, King *James I.* as your Authority, tho' I hope to prove that we may gather from his own Writings that he believed no such thing; the only Reason you seem to lay a stress upon is, his calling a Convocation to ask their advice in relation to Assisting the *Dutch* against their natural Prince; but here, my Lord, you find how far they were from giving the King that pernicious advice, insomuch that their non-Compliance rais'd his Indignation, tho' in his Treatise call'd *jus libera Monarchia*, in his Exposition of that Chapter of *Samuel*,
C which

which relate to the choice of a King he observes, that God never gave permission to the *Israelites* to cast off the worst of their Princes, which might convince your Lordship that Passive Obedience was a *Jewish* as well as a *Christian* Doctrine. There is indeed an Expression you tell us of, his ceasing to be a King when he ceases to Govern according to Law; The words are capable of another Sense, for to urge it in that manner you speak of, according to your Confession, is opposite to the Sense of all those you have hitherto quoted. *Bedell* himself in your next paragraph ends with this Caution, That the Princes person is Sacred and Inviolable, let him act with all the injustice imaginable, which can't be suppos'd if those actions unking him, for he can be no longer sacred when he becomes a private Person. Your Lordship continues your story of the Relief of the *Rockellers*, when we all know the King had a quarrel at that time with *France*, upon another account, it was excusable to take all advantages to attack his Enemy in the weakest part, nor could a better plea be thought of than *Rockelle*, the keeping of which Town out of the hands of the *French* equally concern'd him as the Rebels. Thus, my Lord, your Instances have been examin'd, other places of the Authors produc'd to clear their meaning, and the worst that can be said

said of them is in some cases they allow'd bare self defence without deposing their Prince, which concerns not the Doctors Case in the least. You would make us believe after a thousand undeserv'd Complements on my Lord *Clarendon* from your hands, for he scorn'd and contemn'd your Principles, that the Test impos'd on the Clergy which has these Words, I declare that it's Unlawful to take up Arms against the King, or those Commission'd by him, to mean Lawfully Commissioned, that a latitude might be left to Resist those Ministers who are Commissioned to act Illegally, is a miserable subterfuge without considering that Sentence following, on any pretence whatsoever. My Lord, I should be loth to hazard the Salvation of my Soul on so weak a bottom. This might be perhaps the distinction you meant in your Conference with King *James*. Whatever it was it seems to be a modern Episcopal one, such a distinction as renders that once Reverend Order so venerable in the Eyes of us all at this Day. Your Lordship goes on to acquaint us how truly Conscientious and Scrupulous you was in the Case of the Revolution, how fully resolv'd not to serve, untill by Repeated acts of King *James* it appear'd manifestly that he intend'd a total subversion, you refus'd to be concern'd. This was the part of a wise Man in you to make the best of a bad Market.

The next thing after a considerable interval fill'd up with some thing contriv'd to make the Speech long, and consequently wearisom to the Audience, you came to the Rehearsal. The Author of that paper has so well deserv'd of the *Christian* World, and of you, my Lord, in particular as being a *Christian* Bishop, that I wonder his Learning and parts could not in consideration of all these Services at least obtain the small favour of your Lordship as to be us'd like a Gentleman and a Scholar. To rail at his Papers without a Rational proof might be allowable, if you thought he wanted Sense to defend them, but these innuendo's to blast his Character because he maintain'd the Divine Right of Monarchy in relation to the State, and that of the Bishop's for the Church, are rather the effects of some Men's spleen, than their gratitude. How active your Lordship was to have the Book you suppose to be his censur'd, some Men, tho' I think otherwise of your Lordship, will have it to be a *Christian* way of Retaliation for the prosecution of *D'Foe*, tho' God forbid that a Bishop should look otherwise than with Horrour and detestation on so impious an Incendiary.

I am concern'd to know what your Lordship means by hot Sermons. I see no Reason that a Religion so Holy as our's should be lazily Defended, especially when too many of Her own Sons would Undermine
 Her,

Her, this, my Lord, concerns us all, nor ought trimming to be allow'd of, when experience tells us what encouragement it has already given to our Adversaries; it's our cold behaviour in difficult Times has made our Enemies accuse us of Cowardice and Insincerity; this Zeal therefore, my Lord, as it tends neither to raise Sedition in the State or Innovations in the Church, but to convince People of the necessity of preserving our Religion, deserves rather your Approbation than your Anger; your Lordship would give us the Reason of the Growth of Impiety, but my Lord, the best account I ever could find of the extraordinary encrease of it in these unhappy Times is, that visible neglect of our Religion which appears in the Carriage and Conduct of the most Eminent Clergy, some of which have so vilely prostituted the very Essentials of our Faith, defended the most Anarchical Tenets, and complied with the worst of Times. For my own part I know not what ill Company your Lordship has kept, but the party you fix the Scandal upon of being Mercenary, are so far from deserving such harsh and uncharitable Language, that it's well known how contrary to the Impiety of the Age, they have and continue still to act. Your Lordship with Reason enough seems afraid, that you have wearied the Audience; but lest I should

should be guilty of the same, I conclude,
That unless better Reasons than your Lord-
ship's are produc'd, the First Article of
Impeachment is but very Indifferently made
out.

I am your Lordship's

most Obedient Servant.

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